

**UPDATED RESPONSES AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2011
APPEAR IN RED**

**RESPONSES TO TOWN HALL MEETING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS
December 6, 2010 – January 11, 2011**

**District 6
Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington**

Fishing Related

Anglers are concerned about the commercial harvest on streams and rivers- Catfish (5, 6)
Concerned about the commercial harvest of large catfish, especially flatheads and blue catfish.
Will there be measures taken to restrict commercial catfish harvest? (6)

The department is collecting data from the Ohio River on channel, blue, and flathead catfish to determine the status of their populations and how best to manage both the commercial and sport fish harvest of catfish. The second year of this study will be completed in November, 2011. Results from this study will be included in our 2012 annual reports. Additionally, the Ohio River Fish Management Team consists of fisheries biologists from every state that borders the river. The Team is planning a river-wide, multiple state research project that will address catfish populations including abundance, growth, and health. This study will likely be initiated in 2012.

Announce when fish stocking trucks arrive (6)

The day of trout stocking is announced at all stocking sites except at the Cumberland River and in streams on federally-controlled lands. It is impossible to announce the exact time of stocking since it will vary based on road conditions, distance from the hatchery, and number of stocking locations for an individual truck.

Would like to see a boat ramp for public access directly on Dix River, maybe around High Bridge (6)

The landscape along most of the Dix River is very steep; therefore, there are few areas where it would be possible to build a boat ramp along the tailwater. This is the reason the High Bridge area is not suitable. Areas on both sides of the tailwater are privately owned. The department approached several private landowners in the past concerning purchasing enough land to build a boat ramp, but none were willing to sell. The department has recently implemented a new fishing access program (Kentucky Voluntary Public Access program) which pays landowners to allow access and will be contacting landowners on the Dix River to determine if there is interest in the program. The program is advertised on our website.

Increase in fishing pressure on Dix River. (6)

The department routinely samples trout in the Dix River below Herrington Lake Dam. If sampling data shows a decline in the population, possibly due to increased fishing pressure, necessary restrictions would be proposed.

Stocking numbers, locations, and species information needs to be available on website (6)

The department has added this information to its website under “Fishing and Boating”. This information is provided for our trout stockings as well as our Fishing In Neighborhoods (FINS) program stockings. We also provide a spreadsheet of planned stockings for the whole year which lists species, numbers and locations. There are no dates listed for the planned stocking spreadsheet, due to variability in spawning times and transportation schedules. The link to this spreadsheet is listed under the “Fishing and Boating” link. The planned stocking spreadsheet for 2011 will be posted by April 1st.

Why are trout stocking dates released to the public? (6)

Most trout stocking sites are being managed as a put-and-take fishery because the trout do not tolerate warm water. High angler harvest of the stocked trout in these locations is desired in order to allow removal of the trout before summer.

The trout are being eaten by bigger fish before they can be caught. (6)

This is a potential problem that is common to all fish that the department stocks each year. This is another reason why the trout stocking dates are announced.

Don't stock musky on Kentucky River. (6)

The Kentucky River once supported a native self-sustaining population prior to the construction of the locks and dams on the river. Musky are stocked in the river at very low levels to keep this valuable sport fishery. Although an occasional sport fish may be eaten, rough fish make up the majority of a musky's diet.

Wildlife/ Hunting**Sand Hill Cranes – not open to hunting; protect them (1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)**

KDFWR Commission unanimously passed the proposed season at the June Commission meeting. The USFWS approved Kentucky's hunt plan at their June meeting. Public comments were received and a KDFWR response was prepared and the regulation was submitted to the legislative Administrative Regulation and Review Subcommittee. This regulation received no objection and is now scheduled for the final legislative committee, Interim Natural Resources Committee in November 2011.

Where are the 211,000 acres of public land? (6)

Public land is distributed throughout the state. Using the Guide to Public Hunting Areas, Google Map Hunting Area Overview, Google Earth Overview, or Interactive public hunting and fishing maps described above will allow users to peruse these areas.

Over the last four years and with a commitment of \$1 million per year, KDFWR has increased, by close to 10 thousand acres, the amount of land owned by the department and now available for public access. Within these newly owned areas, the department has now made available nearly 4,000 acres, specifically located in and around the state's most populous area (i.e., the Golden Triangle of Louisville, Lexington and Northern Kentucky). Further, the department averages each year approximately 150 thousand acres in private landowner access agreements, which makes even more land available to the public. Aside from new hunting opportunities, KDFWR has also

developed 13 new bank access sites and more than 30 boating access sites in the last four years; whereas the department now offers 34 new lake fishing opportunities in and around Kentucky's urban areas through our Fishing in Neighborhoods program.

Are you going to do plantings in power line right of ways? (6)

KDFWR currently is growing a partnership with utility companies to provide several options for private landowners to do plantings within the right-of-ways to improve wildlife habitat. The POWER (Promoting Our Wildlife & Energy Resources) Program within certain counties may be available in your area. Please refer to <http://fw.ky.gov/pdf/powerprogram2010.pdf>

If your property is crossed by an electric transmission line in one of the identified areas (refer to link for map), contact your county's Private Lands Biologist or call 1-800-858-1549 for more information.

Bear Season in KY – how will this be expanded? What is the plan? (6)

Expand bear season in KY (6, 7, 9)

Continued research and overall management efforts indicate that Kentucky's bear population can sustain harvest mortality. While Kentucky's bear population continues to grow, harvest of females should remain relatively conservative since our populations are lower than our neighboring Southern Appalachian states. However, the KDFWR does plan to include more counties in the bear zone, likely offer an archery-only hunt, increase the overall quota for bears, and increase the length of the December gun hunt. For 2011, the bear season has been moved forward one week and will occur on the first weekend of December; this was done in an attempt to escape inclement weather and increase hunter participation in this quota hunt.

Waterfowl season in late October, early November (6)

The traditional two-split season has been Kentucky's mainstay for 20 years. Efforts to provide something different in the past have been met with mixed reviews. Most hunters, through their Commission representatives, indicated a preference to stay with the traditional format. In addition, the US Fish and Wildlife Service limits changes of season structure (zones and splits) to five-year windows which will be open again for the 2011-12 seasons. The Wildlife Division will present the opportunity for change to the Commission Wildlife Committee at the July meeting. The 2011-12 seasons will be set based upon the Commission decision.

Fall turkey around bait piles for deer. (6)

Due to their foraging patterns and general dietary habits- wild turkeys are much more attracted to bait than deer. As such, permitting the harvest over bait would lead to an exponential increase in statewide harvest during the fall. However, the KDFWR will examine the regulatory wording of other states and evaluate the potential for including a legal distance for hunting on property where feeding of wildlife occurs in the fall. Such allowances should be approached carefully, however, as significant increases in fall turkey harvest could have immediate and serious detrimental effects on statewide population numbers.

Kansas is doing GPS coordinates for their WMA's, is that something KY is looking into? (6)
GPS files for Public Hunting and Fishing Areas.

<http://www.fw.ky.gov/kfwis/gps/gps.asp>. KDFWR has developed files that can be imported into a variety of Geographic Positioning System (GPS) navigation devices. Different devices may support different formats of files. You may wish use your favorite search engine to search for utilities that will work best with your device.

Is there an increase in the feral horse population? If so, do we need to microchip? (6)

We have issues on certain WMAs with free ranging horses. In most cases, we have been able to identify owners, so the issue for KDFWR has been free ranging livestock, not with truly feral animals. Microchipping is a livestock issue and KDFWR manages wildlife.

Kleber – recommends draw for hunting deer. Why are turkey's not a draw hunt? (6)

Kleber and Rich WMA's both currently have a quota hunt for deer firearms season. Current regulations allow for statewide spring turkey season on department owned WMA's. This current framework allows for the most opportunity for sportsmen in a manner that does not negatively impact the populations.

Bow hunter's preference points system for elk. (6)

Beginning in the 2011 – 2012 season, there will be a separate drawing for archery hunters. This will allow archers to apply for archery only tags, likely providing them a better opportunity for being drawn, given that bull firearms tags will be most applied for by the greatest number of hunters.

Double the prices of elk lottery permits to give KY residents a better chance to get drawn over the non-residents. (6)

KY residents are guaranteed at least 90% of the permits in the current system. Currently, if drawn, a resident pays \$30 for the tag, whereas non-residents pay \$365.

Preference points for elk (2, 4, 6, 7, 8)

The elk quota hunt does not use preference points the way that the deer quota hunts in Ky (and many western states elk hunts) do. This is due to the extreme difference in the number of applicants versus the number of permits available. As it stands now, every person has the exact same chance to be drawn for a tag as everyone else (except that KDFWR only awards up to 10% of the tags to non-residents) Even with preference points, a person likely would never be "guaranteed" to get drawn eventually, the way they currently are for deer quota hunts.

Law Enforcement Related

Need more officers in high use areas –

People are cleaning out the creeks/streams with buckets. Not enough officers present – do we plan to increase Law Enforcement? / Not enough Game Wardens checking hunters.

Historically, we have had geographical coverage of one officer per county except in counties of high population density (Jefferson, Fayette, etc.) or large size (Pike, Muhlenberg, etc.) where the need is for two or more officers to affect adequate coverage. Over the past year, we have done a programmatic evaluation of the Law Enforcement Division structure from a coverage and supervisory chain of command perspective. Our findings indicated that, not only are we critically understaffed at the field level officer position, but our mid level supervisor's time was over-allocated and the command structure was noticeably top heavy.

To resolve this issue, I presented to the Commission and Law Enforcement Division earlier this year a plan to resolve all of these issues and to make sure that we have the most effective and efficient command structure necessary to fulfill our mission.

First, and foremost, we are in the process of filling the vacancies in counties that have accrued over the last several years. Our plan is to hire 20 new recruits in the next few months to fill those long existing vacancies, plus 7-8 more that resulted from summer retirements. Our plan over the next two years is to continue filling vacancies (approx. 10 per year, not counting retirements) until we reach a full complement of 40 more officers in the field than what we currently have. KDFWR believe this is necessary to meet resource needs and public demand.

Other

Expand the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program. (1,3,6)

F&W has met with State Parks to discuss expanding the Becoming an Outdoors Woman programs to parks around the state.

What can we do to get more youth to sportsmen type activities? (6)

The old adage, it takes a hunter to make a hunter is true. Most hunters were taught to hunt by a family member or close friend. The department has many youth programs designed to get kids involved in fishing and hunting. New programs are being considered that would involve the entire family instead of just the youth.

Youth involvement –“Leave no Trace programs? (6)

Department programs primarily focus on activities such as fishing, hunting, archery, wildlife conservation and firearms safety.

Elaborate on the strategy for increasing license sales (6)

- Need hunters and anglers to recruit more participants by mentoring
- Everyone you know who is required to have a license needs to purchase one every year to help fund the resources and be counted
- Volunteer and financially support recruitment efforts like Explore Bowhunting, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, join the local chapter of national hunting and

fishing organizations and be active participant available for mentored hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing

- Become a fan of our Facebook page
- Plant native plant species on your property to attract wildlife
- KDFWR also promotes for recruitment and retention at consumer hunting, fishing and boating shows, we send out 500,000 direct mail communications to remind people to purchase license, we host a very informative web site, and reach over 15,000 fans on Facebook, we advertise on radio, TV, print, digitally and on a grassroots community level the fishing, hunting, boating and wildlife viewing opportunities in Kentucky.

Raise the cost of out-of-state license fees

KDFWR plans to initiate a price-elasticity study during calendar year 2011. At this time, the department will compare our resident and non-resident license and permit fees with other states, and particular with Kentucky's Border States to ascertain whether or not we are competitive in both pricing and opportunities provided. Based on this study, the department expects to amend our current fee structure found in 301 KAR 3:022.

Non-resident license for Native Sons—Lifetime Sportsman's License

Similar to our research and consideration of Lifetime Licenses, KDFWR plans to also include "native son" licenses and similar discounts as part of our price-elasticity study planned for 2011. *This study is expected to initiate before the end of Calendar Year 2011 and be completed by July 2012.*

Thirty Year Hunter/Fisherman or woman/Multi-Year Licenses

Similar to our research and consideration of Lifetime Licenses, KDFWR plans to also include "multi-year" licenses and similar discounts as part of our price-elasticity study planned for 2011. Additionally, for KDFWR to issue Multi-Year Licenses, a statutory change to KRS 150. 175 would be required. *This study is expected to initiate before the end of Calendar Year 2011 and be completed by July 2012.*

Alternate uses for public land & how do we fund this? (6)

Regardless of any additional user pay permit systems, WMAs have to be managed for their primary intended purpose. If not, loss of federal funds is a possibility. Alternative recreational uses are already allowed on WMAs when they are compatible, economically feasible, logistically possible, and environmentally sound.

Benefit to having horseback riders in our areas to take on trails and pick up trash. (6)

The Department is committed to increasing wildlife-related recreational opportunity on WMAs, reducing user conflict, and partnering with other groups when possible. We truly value our partnerships with volunteer groups, including horseback riders, who assist with area maintenance.

How do you evaluate what alternative uses take place on WMA's? (6)

Alternative uses are evaluated on a case by case basis. No tract of land is the same as another. Some areas can sustain certain alternative uses; others are not a good fit. There are many factors to consider, such as conflict with current management activities, topography, sensitive species and habitats, potential environmental impact, ownership of the land, deed restrictions, past history, need, compatibility, budget, impact on employees' time, just to name a few.

Boat ramp/access/parking lots (2, 5, 6, 7)

The KDFWR needs input from the public on possible locations for new boat ramps and we would like to know about any maintenance issues at our existing access sites. If the site you are interested in was not mentioned in the Town Hall Meeting please call us.

Need a close place to launch kayaks. Would like to see public access around High Bridge. (6)

The landscape along most of the Dix River is mostly very steep; therefore, there are few areas where it would be possible to build a boat ramp along the tailwater. This is the reason the High Bridge area is not suitable. Areas on both sides of the tailwater are privately owned. The department approached several private landowners in the past concerning purchasing enough land to build a boat ramp, but none were willing to sell. Staff is currently assessing a 30-acre tract of land along the Dix River that is for sale by The Nature Conservancy.. We also are continually looking for private landowners interested in participating in the Volunteer Public Access Program.

Commission and Committee meeting agendas need to provide more details (6)

This measure was put into action after the 6th District Town hall Meeting. KDFWR added more detail to Committee and Commission meeting agendas, and posted them on our Department website and bulletin boards.

Commission Selection process needs to be addressed. Must be selected by the sportsmen to represent the sportsmen.

- (1) The Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission shall consist of nine (9) members, one (1) from each wildlife district, as set out by the commissioner with the approval of the commission, and not more than five (5) of the same political party.
- (2) The Governor shall appoint the members of the commission subject to confirmation by the Senate. Each of the members shall be appointed for a term of four (4) years and may be reappointed only once. No person who has been convicted of a felony offense, in Kentucky or under the law of any other state, or any other law of the United States shall be eligible to serve on the commission.
- (3) Vacancies through the expiration of terms of the members of the commission shall be filled by appointment by the Governor from a list of five (5) names from each wildlife district, recommended and submitted by the sportsmen of each respective district. When

the term of a member expires, the commissioner shall call a meeting of the sportsmen in that district not later than thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the member's term. Notice of the meeting shall be given by publication pursuant to KRS Chapter 424. At the meeting, the sportsmen in attendance shall select and submit to the Governor a list of five (5) residents and citizens of the district who are well informed on the subject of wildlife conservation and restoration. Each sportsman may vote for one (1) candidate only, and the list submitted to the Governor shall be made up of the names of the five (5) candidates receiving the five (5) highest vote totals. The Governor shall appoint a successor to the member whose term is about to expire within sixty (60) days following the submission to him of the list referred to in this subsection, and in no event later than August 13.

Need more access and we are willing to pay the way. (6)

Need more places to hunt (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Over the last four years and with the commitment of \$1 million per year, KDFWR has increased, by close to 10 thousand acres, the amount of land owned by the department and now available for public access. Within these newly owned areas, the department has now made available nearly 4,000 acres, specifically located in and around the state's most populous area (i.e., the Golden Triangle of Louisville, Lexington and Northern Kentucky). Further, the department averages each year approximately 150 thousand acres in private landowner access agreements, which makes even more land available to the public. Aside from new hunting opportunities, KDFWR has also developed 13 new bank access sites and more than 30 boating access sites in the last four years; whereas the department now offers 34 new lake fishing opportunities in and around Kentucky's urban areas through our Fishing in Neighborhoods program.